

58 BC:

Cic. Fam. 14.4 = SB 6

LETTERS TO FRIENDS

6 (XIV.4)

CICERO TO HIS FAMILY

Brundisium, 29 April 58

From Tullius to his dear Terentia and Tullia and Marcus greetings.

I send you letters less often than I have opportunity, because, wretched as every hour is for me, when I write to you at home or read your letters I am so overcome with tears that I cannot bear it. If only I had been less anxious to save my life! Assuredly I should have seen no sorrow in my days, or not much. If Fortune has spared me for some hope of one day recovering some measure of well-being, my error has not been so total. But if these present evils are to stay, then, yes, I want to see you, dear heart, as soon as I can, and to die in your arms, since neither the Gods whom you have worshipped so piously nor the men to whose service I have always devoted myself have made us any recompense.

I have stayed in Brundisium for thirteen days with M. Laenius Flaccus, a very worthy gentleman. He has disregarded the danger to his own property and status in his concern for my safety, and refused to be deterred by the penalties of a wicked law¹ from carrying out the established duties of hospitality and friendship. I pray that one day I may be able to show him my gratitude. Grateful I shall always be. I am leaving Brundisium on 29 April and making for Cyzicus by way of Macedonia.

Ah, what a desperate, pitiful case is mine! What now? Shall I ask you to come—a sick woman, physically and spiritually

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exhausted? Shall I not ask then? Am I to live without you? Perhaps I should put it like this: if there is any hope of my return, you must build it up, and help in the campaign. On the other hand if all is over, as I fear, then come to me any way you can. Be sure of one thing: if I have you, I shall not feel that I am utterly lost. But what is to become of my Tulliola? You at home must take care of that—I have nothing to suggest. But assuredly, however matters turn out, the poor little girl's marriage and good name must be a primary consideration. Then there is my son. What will he do? I hope that he will always be clasped to your bosom. I cannot write any more now. Grief clogs my pen.

How you have fared I do not know—whether you still have something left, or, as I fear, have been stripped of all. Yes, I trust that Piso² will always be faithful. You need not worry about the freeing of the household. In the first place, the promise made to your people was that you would treat each case on its merits (Orpheus, in fact, is loyal so far, none of the others very noticeably so). The position of the other slaves is that if it turned out that my property was no longer mine, they would be my freedmen, provided they could make good their claim to the status; whereas, if I still had a hold on them, they would remain my slaves except for just a few. But these are minor matters.

You urge me to hold my head high and hope for restoration. I wish the facts may give ground for reasonable hope. Meanwhile, as matters wretchedly stand, when am I going to get your next letter? Who will bring it to me? I should have waited for it at Brundisium if the sailors had let me, but they did not want to lose the fair weather.

For the rest, dearest Terentia, bear up with all the dignity you can muster. It has been a good life, a great career.

The good in me, nothing bad, has brought me down. I have done nothing wrong, except that when I lost the good things of life I did not lose life itself. But if it was more for our children's happiness that I should live, let us bear what remains, intolerable though it be. And yet, while I tell you to be strong, I cannot tell myself.

I am sending Clodius Philhetaerus back, because he is hampered by eye trouble. He is a faithful fellow. Sallustius is the most forward of all. Pescennius is full of kindly feeling towards me; I think he will always be attentive to you. Sicca had told me that he would stay with me, but has left Brundisium.

Take care of your health as best you can, and believe that your unhappiness grieves me more than my own. My dear Terentia, loyalest and best of wives, my darling little daughter, and Marcus, our one remaining hope, good-bye.

29 April, from Brundisium.

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Cic. Fam. 14.2 = SB 7

7 (XIV.2)

CICERO TO HIS FAMILY

Thessalonica, 5 October 58

From Tullius to his dear Terentia and his dear Tulliola and Marcus greetings.

You are not to suppose that I write letters of any length to anyone, unless somebody has written a lot to me and I feel I ought to reply. In fact I have nothing to write about, and at the present time I find it the most intractable of tasks. To you and our Tulliola I cannot write without many tears, for I see that you are very

unhappy—you, for whom I wished all the happiness in the world. I ought to have given

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it to you, and should have done so if I had not been such a coward.

I have a great affection for Piso, as he deserves. I have written encouraging him as best I could and thanking him as was proper. I gather that you pin hopes on the new Tribunes. That will hold good, if Pompey is friendly; but I am still afraid of Crassus.

I see that courage and love shines in all you do, nor does that surprise me. But it is a heartbreaking situation when my distresses are relieved at the cost of so much distress to you. P. Valerius (he tries to help) has written to me an account, which I wept bitterly to read, of how you were taken from the Temple of Vesta to the Tabula Valeria.¹ Ah, my beloved, my heart's longing! To think that you, dearest Terentia, once everybody's refuge in trouble, should now be so tormented! There you are, plunged in tears and mourning, and it is my fault! In saving others, I ruined you and me.

As for what you say about the house, or rather the site on which it stood, indeed I shall not feel myself truly restored until that is restored to me. But these things are not in our hands. What grieves me is that in your unhappy and impoverished state you should be contributing to any necessary outlay. If the thing goes through, we shall win all. But if Fortune stays my enemy, are you going to throw away what poor little you have left? My darling, I beg you, where expense is concerned, let others bear it who can, if only they will; and do not overstrain that frail health of yours, if you love me. For you are before my eyes night and

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day. I see you are shouldering every burden. I fear you may not have the strength. Yet clearly everything depends on you. So in order that we may win the prize of your hopes and efforts, take good care of your health.

I do not know whom I should write to, except those who write to me or who are mentioned in letters from home. Since it is your joint wish, I shall not go further away. But I hope you will send me letters as often as possible, especially if we have grounds for reasonable hope.

Good-bye, my absent loves, good-bye.

Dispatched 5 October, from Thessalonica.

Cic. Fam. 14.1 = SB 8

8 (XIV.1)

CICERO TO TERENCE

Thessalonica, mid November 58, and Dyrrachium, 25 November

From Tullius to his dear Terentia and to dear Tulliola and to dear Marcus greetings.

Many folk write to me and everybody talks to me about you, what amazing courage and fortitude you show, how no trials of body or spirit wear you out. Ah me, to think that my brave, loyal, true, gentle wife should have come by such misery because of me! And to think that our Tulliola should be suffering so much grief on account of her papa, who used to give her so much pleasure! As for Marcus, what can I say? Bitter sorrow and suffering has been his portion since the earliest dawn of intelligence. If I thought all this was the work of fate, as you say, I should find it a little easier to bear. But I am to blame for everything. I thought I was loved by people who were only jealous of my

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success, while I refused to follow those who sought my friendship. If only I had relied upon my own judgement instead of paying so much attention to the talk of friends, whether fools or knaves, how happy I might have been! As things are, since our friends tell us to hope, I shall take care not to let my health let your efforts down. I well understand the magnitude of the task, and how much easier it would have been to stay at home than it is to return. However, if we have all the Tribunes on our side, if Lentulus¹ is as zealous as he seems, and if we also have Pompey's and Caesar's good will, we ought not to despair.

As to my household, I shall do as you tell me our friends think best. As to my place of residence, the epidemic has now disappeared, but while it lasted it did not touch me. Plancius, who is untiring in his good offices, is anxious to have me with him, and keeps me here. I wanted to stay in some less frequented place in Epirus out of the way of Piso² and his soldiers, but Plancius still keeps me here. He hopes it may turn out that he leaves for Italy in my company. If I live to see that day, and return to my family's embraces, and get all of you and my own self back again, I shall feel that your devotion to me and mine to you have been sufficiently rewarded.

Piso's kindness, manliness, and affection for us all is quite superlative. I pray it may bring him happiness; certainly it will bring him honour. As regards my brother Quintus, I meant no criticism of yourself; but I wanted you all to be as close to one another as possible, especially as you are so few. I have thanked the persons you wished me to thank, and written that my information came from you.

Dearest, you tell me that you are going to sell a row of houses. This is dreadful. What in the name of heaven, what

is to happen? And if no change of fortune comes to my relief, what is to become of our poor boy? I cannot go on, the tears overcome me, and I would not wish to draw yours. Just this I will say: if my friends are loyal, money will not be lacking; if not, you cannot achieve results with your money. For pity's sake, pitiable that we are, don't let our unfortunate boy be utterly ruined! If he has something to keep him above penury, he only needs a modicum of ability and a modicum of luck to gain the rest.

Take care of yourself and send me couriers, so that I know what is doing and what you and the children are doing. To be sure, I have not long to wait now. Give my love to Tulliola and Marcus. Good-bye to you all.

I have come to Dyrrachium³ because it is a Free City, and anxious to serve me, and the nearest point to Italy. But if I find there are too many people about for my liking, I shall go somewhere else and send you word.

Dispatched 25 November, Dyrrachium.